

Congressman Earl Blumenauer announced the introduction of bipartisan legislation that would provide a Medicare and Medicaid benefit for voluntary patient-physician consultations regarding advance care planning. These consultations will ensure that individuals' values and goals for care are identified, understood, and respected.

Blumenauer introduced similar legislation in 2009 with broad bi-partisan support and was passed by the House of Representatives as part of the health care reform bill, though it was not included in the Senate version due to the reconciliation rules.

The legislation also provides grants to states to create Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) programs, allows portability of advance directives across states, and requires standards to include completed advance care planning documents within a patient's electronic health record, increasing the likelihood these documents are kept up-to-date and available. The Personalize Your Care Act will be introduced when Congress returns from recess.

Blumenauer was joined by physicians, representatives from health care and senior groups, and a spokeswoman from a family who shared their personal experience with end of life counseling and care.